13 DIE-JESTING stURNe's BURIALLs

Publication, Plagiarism, Pseudonymity, Pseudography, Cenography, Palimpsestuosity, Posthumography, and the Propriety or Pathos of Posterity[1]

*The Late Mr. ——— &c., &c.; continued by Madame L***** with the generous assistance of Madame K***** and Madame U******[2]

THE CATASTROPHE

He's gone! for ever gone! *

Poor Yorick! he was a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy! Where be your gibes now?—Your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?—not one now—quite chap-fallen!

Alas! alas! alas! poor Yorick.

This with the spontaneous flood of friendship your Eugenius signs.

*Mr. Sterne died in March, 1768, soon after the publication of the two volumes of his Sentimental Journey.

"Eugenius," *Yorick's Sentimental Journey Continued: To Which is Prefixed Some Account of the Life of Mr. Sterne;* London, 1769, p. 106

It is to be regretted that *Shakespear's expressive line* to which Sterne was so partial, was not engraven on his tomb; for then, according to his own words "Ten times a day would Yorick's Ghost have the consolation to hear his monumental inscription read over with a variety of plaintive tones, and each, as he walked on, would sighing exclaim, 'ALAS! POOR YORICK!'"

Jenkin Jones, *Hobby Horses;* London, 1797

It seems fitting that Laurence Sterne's surviving correspondence should "swim down the gutter of time" (*TS*, IX. 8.754) to posterity in a Shandean stream of conjecture and confusion. In the slightness of the surviving letters is an initial cause for distress: Sterne's brother-in-law saw fit to commit to flames probably more letters than escaped his fiery desire to protect among the righteous what little might have been left of the family name and reputation. But the 248 surviving letters we have gathered here to warrant the epithet "Shandean," if

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only because the gathering of Sterne's letters began with editors who might have been forgers, and forgers who pretended to be editors, and continued well into the nineteenth century under clouds of suspicion and doubt.

Melvyn New and Joan New, "Introduction." *The Letters, Part One: 1739–1764*. Vol. 7, XLV

Some time ago, I made a promise to the public, to write two annual volumes; but my last publication having sold most shockingly, occasioned by a feverish cholic, of which I died on the tenth of February, one thousand seven hundred and sixty five.—I need not tell your worships how I died, it will be sufficient to say, that I slipped through the Doctor's fingers, without either longing after this world, or fearing the next, — But hold, says a grave gentleman with a grave face, as he sat in a corner smoking his quips *no quid nimis*, what does this *Tristram* mean? He is now dead, and still writes on. I tell thee, my honest friend, that as public indulg'd in writing before I was born, I now claim the privilege of writing after I died. … Dead or alive, I will write, and right or wrong your worships must read.

Anonymous, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Vol. 9. London, 1766, 1–2.[3]

Alas poor Yorick! I knew him well, a Fellow of infinite Jest, most excellent fancy, &c. Wit, Humour, Genius, hadst thou, all agree; One Grain of Wisdom had been worth the Three!

Obituary for Laurence Sterne, *St. James Chronicle*, 10 March 1768

… things had begun to go wrong with Sterne's burial almost immediately after it took place on 22 March [1768].

Kenneth Monkman and W. G. Day, "The Skull," p. 55

The last word of [Jean-Jacques Rousseau's] *Confessions* would have marked a failure … This failure, this becoming next-to-last of the last is what motivated, compulsively, the writing of the *Fourth Promenade* and the return, let us not say the repentance, the rewriting of the confession in the form of an excuse. … In the second paragraph ... de Man uses the expression "textual event," an expression that will reappear on the last page of the same essay. … The expression "textual event" is found again in conclusion [sic], very close to the final word—not only in the chapter, but of the book since that is, in de Man's corpus, the last chapter of the last book he will have published and reread during his lifetime. Let us now recall the beginnings of the *Confessions*, for there are two of them. Let us go back toward the duplicity of these two beginnings, of the first word and the before-the-first word. This before-the-first word announces, repeats, or anticipates the first forward of the *Confessions*, to be sure. Apropos of this avant propos, we could have devoted an abyssal development and carefully archive this strange phenomenon of archivization, to the exceptional treatment that this before-the-last-word, this little

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> page of the Geneva manuscript, will have undergone. … There you are, pardon me for having spoken too long. I cut things off here, arbitrarily. But not without saluting once again the spirit, I mean the ghost of my friend.
>
> Jacques Derrida, "Typewriter Ribbon, Ink (2): (Within Such Limits), pp. 302–03; 315–16; 332; 342; 345

False Starts and Other Dead Ends

I arrive at the grave. It's late in the afternoon; white clouds over a blue sky biding its time before it turns red. The pub down the street where I had ordered Yorkshire pudding and roast beef is now closed. As it turns out, I will not eat that wonderful English Sunday afternoon meal I paid for a few hours earlier. Others have been to this grave before me, no doubt; I think to pay their respects. To remember. Maybe to leave some flowers. Perhaps to mourn. Perhaps to learn something about Sterne in the hope of communing with his ghost. The rather large tombstone I now see in front of me lies directly next to the church and looks out to the rather large churchyard below. Each burial plot has a number, I learn from a surprisingly impatient cleric in the church when I ask—very politely, I thought—where I can find the grave. Shortly before, when I was in Laurence Sterne's library, the room where Sterne wrote, the room where the scene with Stephen Fry was shot for Michael Winterbottom's 2006 film adaptation of *Tristram Shandy: A Cock and Bull Story*; in that room, I say, I had an epiphany of sorts: I could write an article about Laurence Sterne, *Hamlet*, the history of Shandy Hall, and Yorick. This is the story of the article I failed to write, traces of the many false starts and even more numerous dead ends. Please consider this a De-Composition. Written in Bite SIGHS Fragments. Through conceptual juxtapositions of materials that look like two or more superimposed, palimpsestuous images or texts. Questions of relative legibility that call for attempts to render a text more legible deconstruct in ways that may be humorous or sad: we question what an error is, whether it is worth correcting, whether correcting it or even calling attention to it is itself an error.

Fauxte de Lecture

Broadly speaking, this chapter is about the relation between reading and fault, the French expression *faute de lecture* meaning either misreading or lack of reading, and the conditions under which a writer or reader may be forgiven for errors it would seem ungenerous to note, much less to fault. If to consider reading so would be to consider too closely, there remains the possibility of reading as a *fauxte de lecture*, thinking about the status of a critical faux pas when it comes to talking about a topic

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Figure 13.1 The Late Mr.——— &c., &c. at Laurence Sterne's unkempt grave, July 2016. Photo by the author.

that is considered taboo in many circumstances. Like death. Or physical remains like a skull. Both Sterne's reception of Shakespeare and the reception of Sterne's reception evident in some of the perhaps inexcusably excessive number of epigraphs at the head provide the occasion, or excuse, should one be necessary, to do an exercise in reading too closely, or "too-close reading," imagined as a kind of compulsively overattentive account of what happens in the name of memory and posterity, namely: reading and correcting very small but nevertheless significant errors and inaccuracies in citations, transcriptions, inscriptions, and printings, and the compulsive need to back up one kind of medium, say photography or writing on one material support, say a headstone, with photographs and text on another, say paper, as if the relative durability of the support made no difference.[4] This compulsive record-keeping as crypt-keeping assumes a bio-biblio-graphical default: the name of the (as if already) dead author and the title of a publication are each uncritically assumed to be indivisible, part of a couple, a genealogy. In the too-close reading I

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will undertake of Sterne's remains in this chapter, the seemingly unquestionable and foundational opposition between proper names and titles is deeply disturbed, not only by posthumous forgeries of Sterne's writings, continuations of his novels by anonymous or pseudonymous friends of Sterne's, and Sterne's several pseudonyms, but also through a spectralization of what some critics might consider to be the bedrock of Sterne's remains: his skull and a holograph with the author's signature on it, as if the remains were the equivalent of a last will and testament. Everything can be archived into order, and writing itself becomes a crypt.[5]

Although Sterne's life can be and has been narrated easily enough as a chronological biography, and his works entered into a publication timeline, what I call Sterne's spectralization of writing involves a refusal to encrypt himself by projecting an orderly future for publication of his works after his impending death from tuberculosis, a future in which he will have had the last word, even from beyond the grave. Rather than reread Sterne's writings in light of their spectralization, I will instead focus on one moment in his writing that involves a citation and a proper name that also served Sterne as an alias, namely, "Alas, poor Yorick!"

What follows falls into three parts: I first narrate a story about how everything went wrong, as Kenneth Monkman puts it, with Sterne's first burial and how the 1969 reburial of Sterne attempted to set things right while raising questions in the press about whether the skull reburied was or was not Sterne's. I then connect Sterne's spectralization of Yorick's skull in *Hamlet* and the SIGHs that, according to Sterne's narrator in *Tristram Shandy*, passersby of Yorick's grave will automatically release, on the one hand, with, on the other, Sterne's pseudonymous use of Yorick in posthumously published letters, some of which may be forgeries, and forgeries printed under Sterne's name or his pseudonym Yorick. Permit me to pause here to cite Sterne on Yorick's grave in full:

> He lies buried in a corner of his
> church-yard, in the parish of——,
> under a plain marble slab, which his
> friend Eugenius, by leave of his executors,
> laid upon his grave, with no more than
> these three words of inscription serving
> both for his epitaph and elegy.
> Alas, poor Y O R I C K!
> Ten times in a day has Yorick's ghost
> the consolation to hear his monumental
> inscription read over with such a variety
> of plaintive tones, as denote a general
> pity and esteem for him;——a foot
> way crossing the church-yard close by
> the side of his grave, —not a passenger

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goes by without stopping to cast a look
upon it, ——and sighing as he walks
on,
Alas, poor Y O R I C K!

(27–28)

We may already notice that Jenkin Jones misquoted Sterne in the epigraph in this chapter taken from *Hobby Horses*.

Having established Sterne's connection between his repetition of the citation of Hamlet, on one hand, and Yorick's ghost, on the other, I then turn to what I call "fauxrensic" questions about the partly posthumously published article entitled "The Skull," which focused on Sterne's first burials and his 1969 reburial organized by Monkman.[6] (Monkman had died before the editor of his draft and notes, W.G. Day, posthumously revised it for publication.) "The Skull" appeared in a commemorative issue of *The Shandean* that begins with an obituary of Monkman written by Day. Inscription and transcription are somehow just as important—the print record has to be there to testify to the existence of the headstone, which in turn has to appear in a photograph in order to support the claim made in print. As if the stone would get lost if it were not archived in print, as if paper were a more lasting support than stone (or parchment, for that matter, to which, as Hamlet knows, only fools look for assurance).

My aim is to shed light on the way the posthumous orientation of Sterne's writings, and writings by contemporaries about them, reveal the way critical reception involves endless words after the last word in the forms of excuses, apologies, preemptive lobbings of grenades at each other across barbed wire, attacks that are always escalating, always accelerating, leaving only a faux pax after the latest inescapable faux pas, so to speak, in the friendly fire of posthumous publication. Attention to the fate of Sterne's remains considered along a continuum of skulls, ghosts, headstone inscriptions, and text printed or handwritten on paper, will reveal the limits of a materialist account of posterity focused on monuments and the afterlives of authors and characters. I offer a standing invitation to historicists to examine more broadly and more deeply the German, Italian, and French reception of Sterne and Shakespeare. Tuned into specters, hauntings, followings, and forgeries, they might find themselves open to thinking about transmission as repetition that is achronic rather than only sequential. More particularly, I want to rethink transmission through citation. In my view, the citation of one author by another is a structure of repetition that involves more than a coupling of names, an intra-textual and intrapsychic structure I call "self-psy-tation," occurrences of the coupling splitting up into more than one personality.[7] Self-psy-tation includes citations of one's own possibly anonymous or pseudonymous works, such as Sterne's anonymously published sermon reprinted as Yorick's sermon and posthumously recited by

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Corporal Trim as well as continuations of one's own possibly pseudonymous or posthumously published works by another possibly anonymous or pseudonymous author. It can be a bit confusing.

Too-close reading concerns the validity of appeals to institutional norms of knowledge production to determine, or to try to determine, error and to finish off discussion with a quasi-verdict by finding fault with what are arguably tiny errors of transcription or omission in a quotation: for example, the difference in Sterne's writings between what is cited and what is plagiarized as well as possible differences between what Sterne writes and what other authors quote him as having written, what can be excused and pardoned and forgiven or what must be faulted, and, on the other hand, the writing that questions—through a potentially unstoppable irony—the legitimacy of marking the grounds of a fault and is the condition of the pathos inherent in a pardon, or more narrowly, a "parole" that takes the form of last words that are already a citation of words previously said, perhaps more than once, and hence are always last words after the last, *fauxte de mieux*, and in the case of Sterne's citation of Hamlet's "alas, poor Yorick," a line addressed in *Hamlet* to the remains of a dead character who never says a word. Rather than merely reroute Sterne's reception of *Hamlet* back through Jacques Derrida's reading in *Spectres of Marx*, a work dismissed if not denigrated by both New and New-New Historicists who banish reading in favor of descriptions of things, I want to open new questions about the relation between publication, pathos, posterity, material inscription, and what counts as reading, misreading, not reading, or unreading, a concern shared by Paul de Man as well as Derrida.[8] A distinction between reading and "reading," a distinction Paul de Man drew in his essays on defacement and epitaphs in *Allegories of Reading* to distinguish his deconstructive practice of misreading from what counts institutionally as reading—I say this distinction all but disappears, perhaps involuntarily, in too-close reading, as the clown or buffo's smile returns in the form of a skull's rictus.[9] At the risk of being impertinent, I refuse to equate reading with the institutional norms of textual crypt-keeping—as if the text were analogous to a monument in need of preservation and restoration—norms that forgive as a matter of course errors so small that they are regarded as inconsequential. This generosity of spirit may sometimes be irresponsible because it does not look closely at what it is forgiving—if it knows what it is forgiving. Too-close reading could be considered "OBleak" reading, or reading "awrythe," to coin a portmanteau word by way of a barely legible pun. Or, to acknowledge the way the pathos of caretaking and caregiving can become the pathway of a joke delivery in Sterne's writings as well as in good-humored modern criticism about it, consider it reading as For Crying Out Loud in Groups.[10] To paraphrase Sterne, "Let me say what I have to say in my own way." I seriously hope you can die-jest all that. I'm serving what follows as textual hors d'oeuvres served *À la carte postal*.[11]

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Now, back to my story. I went to Sterne's grave after stopping at Shandy Hall on a Sunday afternoon to take the tour. I was on my way to Stratford-upon-Avon for the World Shakespeare Congress in 2016. At the time, I didn't know Sterne was buried just down the street. I had already planned to visit Shakespeare's grave at Holy Trinity Church during the conference, having watched a recently aired documentary about Shakespeare's missing skull. A candle-lit function at the church had been organized for that night, but I would miss it. Later, after I had returned stateside, I would learn that the tombstone had been put there in 1998 in memory of Kenneth Monkman, organized by other Sterne scholars to commemorate Monkman and his reinterment of Sterne's skull in 1969 in the churchyard at St. Michael's Church, the church where Sterne had preached his sermons, sermons he had published under the name of Mr. Yorick. Several newspaper stories about the reburial, I discovered, ran with the title "Alas, poor Yorick." Shortly before I got to the grave, during the tour of Shandy Hall given by the curator Patrick Wildgust, I had seen a black and white engraving entitled "YORICKS GRAVE." In a churchyard that looks a lot like St. Michael's, a mournful-looking and apparently homeless family of three stand by a tombstone with "ALAS POOR YORICK" written on it in all capital letters and without an exclamation point at the end, as the citation appears in *Tristram Shandy* (see Figure 13.2). I wondered if this was an illustration of Sterne's tombstone with Sterne's last words written on them.[12] And why was there a skull next to the grave? Was it supposed to call up Yorick's exhumed skull in *Hamlet*? What kind of StURNe Buriall was this? The poem at the bottom of the engraving, composed of two quatrains flanking the title "YORICKS GRAVE," was not of much help. I did connect the citation of Sterne in the engraving citing Shakespeare to the word "sigh" in the poem. That was about as far as I got.

But when I learned after the tour that Sterne was buried in the churchyard just down the road, I decided to check the tombstone to see what was actually written on it. After all, Sterne made Shakespeare's line "Alas poor Yorick" famous by citing it twice in *Tristram Shandy* next to the black page just before Parson Yorick dies, and Sterne later launched it into wide circulation across Europe by citing the soon-to-be famous lament again in *A Sentimental Journey to France and Italy*, a novel published, like Sterne's *Sermons*, under the pseudonym Mr. Yorick[13] (see Figure 13.3). Wouldn't it be strange, even rather humorous, if Sterne had quoted himself—or one of his pseudonymous "selves"—quoting Hamlet as his posthumously published last words? I walked down to the churchyard to see. The sleuth in me couldn't resist solving the mystery of Sterne's headstone. Alas, the tombstone I found was something of a disappointment. "Alas, poor YORICK!" was not written on it as I had hoped. Instead, I found this rather bare bones inscription (see Figure 13.1):

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Figure 13.2 "Yoricks Grave"; Singleton, Pinxt. Nameseehc, Sculpt. Published London, 1792.[14]

LAURENCE STERNE
1713–68

Author of
Tristram Shandy
and
A Sentimental
Journey

Still, I was moved. I asked my wife, who had been waiting for me with our son at the pub while I took the tour, to take a photograph of me crouching next to the grave as I kept my balance by holding on to the slightly tilted tombstone. She happily obliged. Then, we got in our rental

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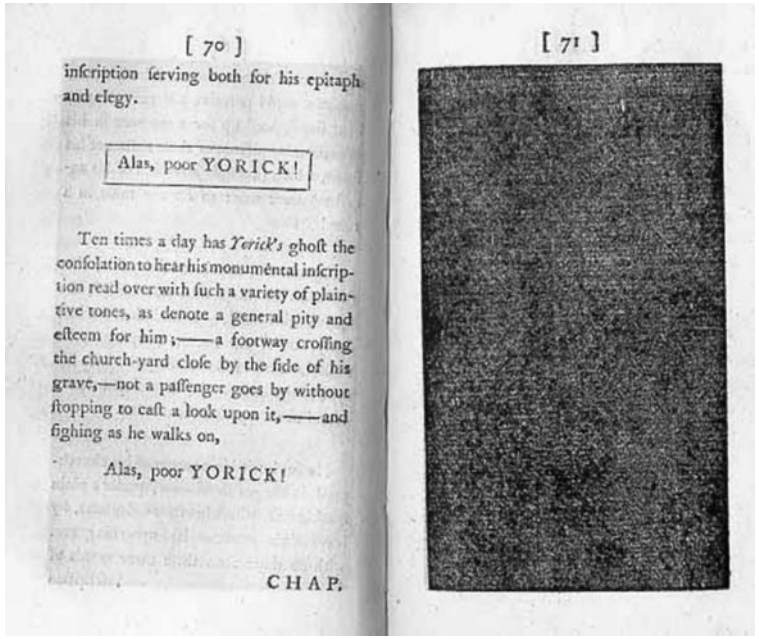
[70]

inſcription ſerving both for his epitaph and elegy.

Alas, poor YORICK!

Ten times a day has *Yorick's* ghoſt the conſolation to hear his monumental inſcription read over with ſuch a variety of plaintive tones, as denote a general pity and eſteem for him;——a footway croſſing the church-yard cloſe by the ſide of his grave,—not a paſſenger goes by without ſtopping to caſt a look upon it,——and ſighing as he walks on,

Alas, poor YORICK!

CHAP.

[71]

Figure 13.3 "Alas, poor YORICK" cited twice opposite the black page, as printed in the third edition of *Tristram Shandy*. By permission of University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections.

car and drove southwest to Stratford. My stomach growled loudly, and I thought of that lovely roast beef and Yorkshire pudding Sunday afternoon special.

As it turned out, I guessed right when I wondered about the engraving in Shandy Hall.[15] Jenkin Jones, in *Hobby Horses* (London: 1797), quoted in an epigraph, need not have been concerned about the inscription on the tombstone, even if the headstone he saw or heard about did not bear it. There is another, earlier tombstone inside St. Michael's Church. Across the top is written: "alas! poor Yorick." Though decomposed over time, the words are still legible. In 1969, Monkman had this tombstone moved from St. George's Field Burial Ground at Hanover Square where Sterne had originally been buried—reburied actually, but more about that later—to St. Michael's church in Coxwold along with Sterne's skull and bones. This tombstone was mounted on a wall inside the church. I had missed it. Damn cleric. Still, I was wrong about one thing. Sterne did not write the inscription. "Two brother Masons," reads the bottom of the inscription, inscribed and installed the stone. The brothers got the punctuation in the quotation wrong, however. Whereas Sterne writes "Alas, poor

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IN SEARCH OF A WIFE 265

Near it the dark, o'erspreading yew
Sheds tears of morn and evening dew;
And, as the sculpture meets the eye,
"Alas, Poor Syntax!" with a sigh,
Is read by every passer-by:
And wakes the pensive thought, sincere,
For ever sad!—for ever dear!——

My verse has now no more to tell.——
The Story's done.—*SYNTAX FAREWELL!*

Figure 13.4 "Alas, Poor Syntax"; William Combe, *Tours of Doctor Syntax*.

Yorick!" in *Tristram Shandy*, the headstone leaves out the exclamation mark after Yorick.[16] Rather oddly, the tombstone states "Near by this Place / Lyes the body of Laurence Sterne," not the customary "Here lies."[17] Sterne is apparently already lost at burial, said to be some unknown distance from his actual resting place. Now mounted on the wall of the church, the first tombstone looks more like a memorial plaque than it does a tombstone. A small circular-shaped, dark, grey rock sits on the wall just to its left with a text, in a smaller font, that reads as follows: "The stone which marked the place of Laurence Sterne's grave in London was moved to Coxwold when his remains were reinterred in 1969" (see Figures 13.5 and 13.6). Why the stone was moved to Coxwold but mounted in the church is left to the viewer to imagine. Monkman had Sterne's skull moved to St. Michael's because St. George's Field was about to be turned into an apartment building.

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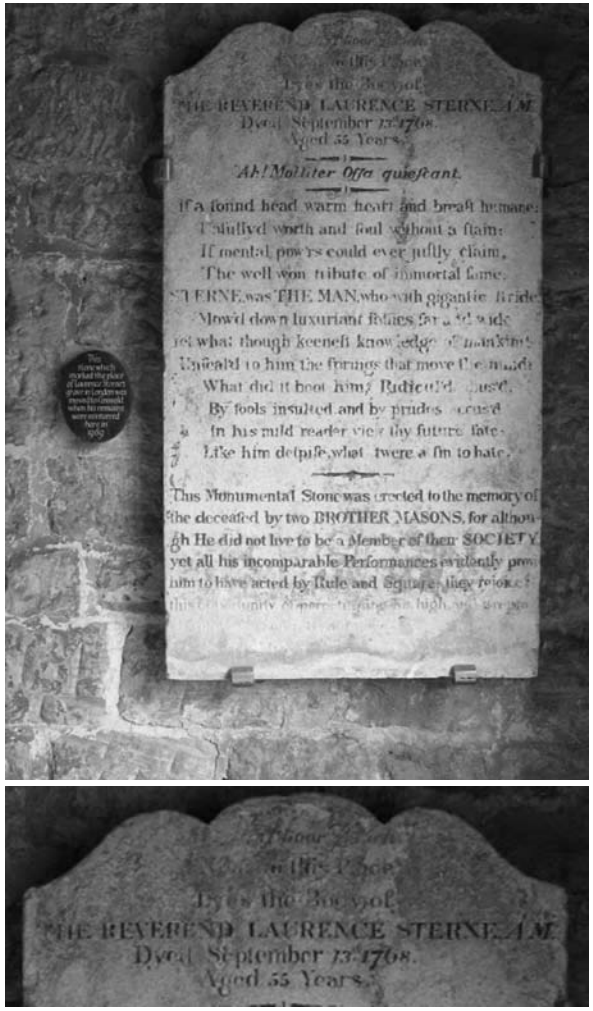

Figures 13.5 and 13.6 Sterne's first headstone with detail showing that the words "Alas poor Yorick" are barely legible. Photos by the author.

THIS IS A HEAD ____.

My story is not yet finished. According to W.G. Day, Monkman commissioned the new headstone.[18] It's not clear to me who composed the inscription. Monkman kept the first earlier tombstone, the one mounted in St. Michael's, too. Actually, he kept only one of two tombstones from Sterne's grave in St. George's Field. In 1843, the Sterne Property put a memorial tombstone at the foot of the grave where the earlier, first one stood at the head. No one knows what happened to the later "cleaned

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and restored" headstone. No one knows who composed the epitaph for the newer one at St. Michael's. If there was a tombstone when Sterne was first buried, it too went missing. Perhaps it resembled Parson Yorick's, who, Tristram tells the reader, "lies buried in the corner of his churchyard, in the parish of——, under a plain marble slab, which his friend Eugenius, by leave of his executors, laid upon his grave. …"

Memoires d'Autre Tombes

I found myself at another dead end with not even a detour in sight. There was nothing left to tell, only questions to ask. What was Monkman thinking when he decided not to keep the first tombstone he installed when reinterring Sterne's skull in 1969 and commissioned a new one in a shape that echoes the older and that edits down the more expansively inscribed tombstone of 1843 to a name and two book titles? And why did he keep the older, putatively "first" tombstone and put it inside the church instead of losing it, as he apparently did the other, more recent tombstone of 1843? Did he have in mind the way Shakespeare never makes clear, as many critics before me and including me have observed, whether the "self-same skull" the gravedigger in *Hamlet* identifies as Yorick's is indeed Yorick's?[19] Who knows? Monkman is dead now. *Requiescat in pace*. An obituary for Monkman—the writer of which could not resist "Alas, poor Yorick" when describing Sterne's skull, says he is to be buried at the foot of Sterne's grave.[20] Other Sterne critics present at the reburial in 1969 are still alive, but their memory fails. One critic who was not present at the reinterment of the skull tells an interesting story about the burial of Sterne as the comic reburial of Yorick's skull (AKA Sterne's alias) in an endnote in an article he published on *Tristram Shandy*.[21] But he graciously admitted to me in an email that he had made up the story when I contacted him about it.[22] Here we have an example—not that I am faulting it—of what I call "pseudography."[23]

Give It a Rest

In addition to generating false narratives in obscure textual regions, Sterne's reburial raises questions not only about Sterne's skull, but also about who said what about it. "Sterne is at rest again" ran the headline of a story in the *Times*. But was he? Was it Sterne's skull? Thomson, in his "Alas poor Yorick," cites the inscription itself to cast doubt:

> The Freemasons who took the trouble to erect an inaccurate headstone to Sterne in the St. George's burial ground did preface this inscription "Near to this Place Lies the Body. …" This suggests that they wished to show concern for the neglect of Sterne rather than exact knowledge of the position of his remains. Whether or not Sterne's

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> corpse made a single or return journey to Cambridge, it does seem more proper to consider the Laurence Sterne Trust's *objet trouvé* as one among the other 11,500 skulls recovered from the burial ground.

This question of whether the skull was Sterne's was displaced by a new question—about whether Monkman had been properly quoted. The reporter writes that Monkman added: "I feel beyond reasonable doubt that these are the remains of Sterne." Apparently, this transcription wasn't correct—or it was not what Monkman meant to say. In a reply to the *Times* that ran as "Alas poor Yorick," Monkman writes:

> No one used words with greater niceness than Sterne; I hope therefore you will allow me to correct a minor lack of it in your report (June 9) of the reburial of his remains at Coxwold. You quote me as saying "I feel beyond reasonable doubt that these are the remains of Sterne." What I said or meant to say, is that I feel reasonably sure they are. There is a difference of meaning here which, though it take more than a pair of calipers to measure it, does, I suggest, leave room for that "certain area of doubt" which Mr. David Thomson calls for in his letter to you (June 7).

Monkman then defers final judgment to further "scientific" inquires, something that apparently never happened. How that is to happen *after* the skull has been reburied remains unclear. Then comes the punch line and closer from Monkman: "If we have reburied the wrong one, nobody, I feel beyond reasonable doubt, would enjoy the situation more than Sterne" (53). In "The Skull," Monkman writes:

> The question of accurate quotation may have been settled, but errors of transcription had not been. The wording has often been transcribed, and often quoted, but never, to my knowledge, with complete accuracy, as I hope I shall be forgiven if I print it yet once more, as checked today against the original which lies no more than a step away from where I wrote.
>
> (53)[24]

FAUX PAUSE: Impropriety, Proper Names, and Intellectual Property

I began this chapter by observing the strange ways Sterne's reburials, tombstones, and epitaphs involve various displacements and replacements of Sterne's remains as a way of describing a continuity between the productive resistance those remains offer to his crypt-keepers and the equally productive resistance Sterne's writings offer modern critics who want to post them historically and bibliographically in an orderly, linear,

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chronological fashion.[25] More important than the identity of the skull's former owner, in my view, are the appearances and disappearances of the headstones and questions of their transcription and misquotations of comments about them. The displacements of Sterne's remains rather than their proper placement six feet under, I suggest, are unconscious or unwitting attempts to correct the record paradoxically by defacing it, limiting the revised seemingly transparent text to the name and title, connecting author, dates, and titles in a way Sterne himself had refused to do, most conspicuously on the title page of *Tristram Shandy*, which, as John M. Yoklavich noted decades ago, does not give the names of the author and publisher, nor does it give the place of publication.[26] It certainly is odd that Monkman feels the need to transcribe the same inscription twice, the second time fully because it had apparently been incorrectly transcribed many times previously. And, yet, Monkman doesn't notice—or editor Day doesn't notice—that in the drawing of the tombstone reproduced in the article, the words "Alas poor Yorick" do not appear.

Plagiarism, apparently laid to rest for modern Sterne critics, leaves the question of burial unresolved. Links between theft and improper burial in Sterne's case also involve a different relation between the couple and the group. In Sterne's case, a question of forgery comes to the fore as a kind of palimpsestuous effect that happens in publication as the name and the title keep splitting up, or one member of the couple is alive and the other is dead. Who wrote what? This question of forgery is particularly acute in relation to posthumous publication. The closer we get to specters in Sterne, the closer we get to critical disagreement about what is an original letter and what is a forgery. Consider a particularly brazen posthumously published forgery, *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*[27] 1775,[28] thought by modern critics to have been forged by William Combe (no name appears on the title page, though Sterne's name does appear on the first page in the dedication).[29] In the unnamed Editor's Preface, Combe insists that the letters are authentic, unlike widespread and common forgeries of the time. But it is in Sterne's own posthumously published letters related to ghosts and epitaphs that the question of forgery is most acute in Sterne's writings, as we saw in the epigraph taken from Melvyn and Joan New. As Harlan W. Hamilton says bemusedly in his essay on the letters published

> in 1788 with the title *Original Letters of the Late Reverend Mr. Laurence Sterne; Never Before Published Printed at the Logographic Press* and issued without a word of explanation twenty years after Sterne's death, this collection of thirty-nine letters contains material which, if it can be accepted as authentic, is of substantial importance to the biographer of Sterne. Unfortunately, the biographers have never been able to agree on its authenticity.
>
> (420)

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And in his conclusion, Hamilton presents the letters as a palimpsest, with Combe's sheets "overlay[ing"] Sterne's:

> That the letters are essentially of Combe's composition, few readers will now deny. Yet some of them are fairly close to Sterne originals, and three—possibly even four—are very probably much as Sterne wrote them. Yet the letters as we have them, whether authentic, imitative, or mixed, set forth facts about Sterne and Combe which biographers must treat with cautious respect. Much of the writing is imitative overlay, but the occasional particularization and sometimes the style itself must convey tantalizing suggestions of Laurence Sterne's presence just beneath the surface.
>
> (140)

In other words, Sterne haunts Combe's letters. In the first letter, Sterne tells a story about how he visits an abbey and communes with the ghosts of nuns. He speaks to one spirit in particular, who happens to be named Cordelia. As Walter Sydney Sichel observed over a century ago, the ghost of Cordelia appears in two letters published in Sterne's posthumously published *Journal to Eliza,* a work Sterne is thought by modern critics to have composed around 1767 as he neared death.

All My FAUXT? Considering Too Closely

Let me pursue these concerns about the couple who keep splitting up into SIGH-tation and multiple personalities that "self-psyte," theft and improper burial, forgery, plagiarism, specters, and posthumous publication by turning now to the posthumously published article devoted to Sterne's reburial in 1969 entitled "The Skull." I will now do the "too-close" reading of it that I promised earlier in this chapter. As I noted above, this highly memorable article appears in a commemorative issue *The Shandean* published in Monkman's honor the same year he died, 1998—also the same year Sterne's new tombstone was unveiled in his memory. Somewhat oddly, given the title, the authors begin not with an account of the skull, but with a story of Sterne's "newly erected headstone," namely, the one that now stands in St. Michael's churchyard. The headstone requires Monkman to write an apology of sorts since it "bears no inscription beyond the name and date of birth of the presumed former possessor of the skull." Said in effect to be too small for the number of carved letters that needed to be written on it, the headstone just will not serve as a (writing) support in the way that an inscription mentioning the skull just reburied in front of it could. That story lies buried, as it were, like the skull "presumed" to be Sterne's: notes and a draft of it were left in a desk drawer by Monkman at his death. Monkman took the story to his grave. Already in the second sentence of the article, the head, or the "to be or not to be" heading of the article, is in play. "The skull in question" is not assigned

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to Sterne. Below the text, we see a photograph of Monkman touching, or as the caption has it, "inspecting" what is said to be "the first of Sterne's tombstones" lying on the ground in front of him, with other tombstones resting in the field behind him (see Figure 13.7). Where one would expect a photo of the newly erected headstone, a photograph of the purportedly first headstone appears in its stead. (This headstone was moved through the lobbying of Monkman and the Shandean Society from St. George's to St. Michael's).[30] No photograph of the new tombstone is to be found in "The Skull." No explanation is given for the new tombstone. Why not keep the old one shown in Figure 13.5? Why not keep the one from 1843 that has a much fuller inscription than the 1969 headstone for which Monkman apologizes? We are not told. We can only wonder: was the posthumously

The Skull

The skull in question still rests peacefully at this moment where it has done since June 1969, just outside the south wall of St Michael's Church, Coxwold, North Yorkshire – but with this noticeable difference. It has a newly erected headstone, and the occasional visitor may be surprised to find that this bears no inscription beyond the name and date-of-birth of the presumed former possessor of the skull. There are good reasons for this, both of space and expense. The mysterious and, at times, macabre journeyings that eventually brought it to Coxwold defy any telling within the limits of a headstone – and even just to hint at them would be both tantalising and needlessly expensive at the cost of letter-cutting today.

Figure 2. Kenneth Monkman inspecting the first of Sterne's gravestones.

Figure 13.7 The first page of "The Skull" in *The Shandean*. © The Laurence Sterne Trust.

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published reconstruction of what Day calls Monkman's "draft and notes" too hot off the repression to remember to include a photograph of the new headstone? Is it impertinent to see some kind of resistance to reading the tombstone in Monkman's unpublished notes? Did Monkman even want to ever let them see the Daylight of publication, as it were?

Apart from being a posthumous publication revised by the editor, the Monkman/Day "The Skull" article is a bit startling in its use of photographs and typography for a note about the article's genesis and provenance. For example, there is a perhaps unintentionally funny photograph of Monkman smiling at the Sexton in the grave he has just been digging for the skull that recalls the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet*: consider the Sexton as gravedigger, Monkman as Hamlet, and Day as Horatio. You'd think they'd have had an open casket ceremony so they could joyfully act out the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet*, calling Sterne's skull by Sterne's pseudonym, Yorick (see Figure 13.8).

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Figure 12. Kenneth Monkman (left) and J.C.T. Oates (centre) talking to Mr Robert Featherstone, the sexton.

Figure 13.8 Sterne's old headstone, now inside St. Michael's, next to the grave newly opened to hold Sterne's skull, missing from the photograph. © The Laurence Sterne Trust.

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No skull appears, however, nor does the miniature coffin containing the skull we see being lowered into the grave in a different photograph. Oddly, the tombstone standing behind the open grave is the one from St. George's, not the one commissioned by Monkman. There is also a photograph of "the grave in 1968" that shows both tombstones that stood in St. George's, neither of which is legible. In 1843, the Sterne Property put a memorial tombstone at the foot of the grave where the earlier, first one stood at the head (see Figures 13.9 and 13.10). Both headstones are carefully described in the article, but the transcription for the disappeared stone is not given at the beginning of the article where it would have been most pertinent in order to explain what was lost when the new headstone was commissioned. Whereas Monkman says he checked his transcription of the first headstone against the original headstone, Day transcribes the 1843 inscription not from the

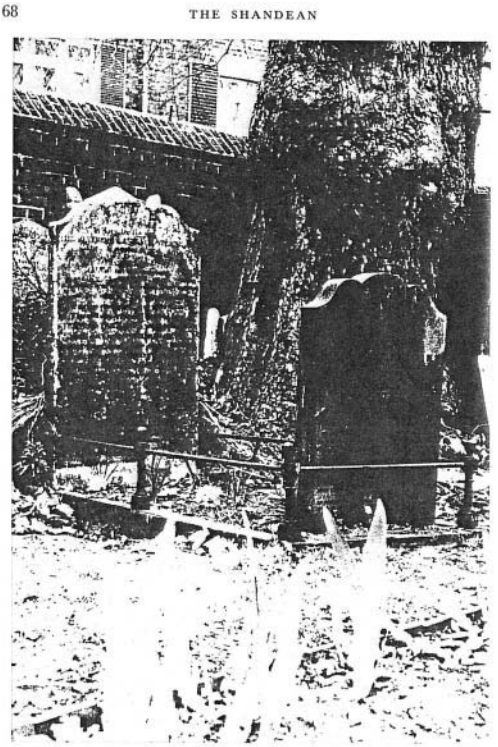

Figure 6. The grave in 1968.

Figures 13.9 and 13.10 Two photographs of the two headstones for Sterne's grave; the first one circa 1768 at the back, and the second, from 1843, reproduced in "The Skull." © The Laurence Sterne Trust.

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THE SKULL 59

In Memory of
The Rev. Laurence Sterne, M. A.
Rector of Coxwould, Yorkshire,
Born November 24, 1713,
Died March 18, 1768.
The celebrated author of "Tristram Shandy" and
"The Sentimental Journey" works, unsurpassed in the
English Language for a richness of humour and a pathetic sympathy,
which will ever render the name of their author immortal.
"Requiescat in pace"
The headstone to this grave, was cleaned and restored,
by the owner of the "Sterne" property, at Woodhall, near Halifax,
in the County of York, who also erected the foot and border stones
in the year 1893.

This addendum was illustrated by a drawing of the refurbished grave, but a rather clearer image of the monument is to be found in a photograph printed in *The Bookman* of July 1913 (Fig. 5). This photograph throws up a new and apparently insoluble problem. The earliest transcriptions of the wording of the headstone all have the incorrect date of death – September 13, 1769; this is clearly visible in the first visual representation of the grave, in Lysons' work of 1843; and in 1855 'A Shandyite' lamented that the Revd Mr Peate had not taken

Figure 5. 'Sterne's Grave in St. George's Burial Ground, Bayswater Road', *The Bookman*, July 1913.

Figures 13.9 and 13.10 Two photographs of the two headstones for Sterne's grave; the first one circa 1768 at the back, and the second, from 1843, reproduced in "The Skull." © The Laurence Sterne Trust.

photograph of it, but from a prior photocopy of a transcription published in 1769, without mentioning that it was also the source for the 1843 headstone. The original photographs reproduced in "The Skull" have all gone missing, by the way.[31]

Back to B/l/ack

The unsigned note on the publication history of Monkman and Day's article "The Skull," marked off by asterisks above and below it, reads like the narrative frame from a Gothic, epistolary, or Romantic novel about a found manuscript, possibly missing pages or mixing more than one manuscript (see Figure 13.11):

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rule, my Lord, — most ungrammatically!' down to 'and send *Mercury*, with the *rules and compasses*, if he can be spared, with my compliments to —— no matter' (*TS*, 3.12.213-14). This letter is written from Newcastle, and appeared in the November issue of a monthly periodical published in that city, *The Literary Register: or, Weekly Miscellany*.[17] Taking those initials, C. A., with that Newcastle provenance, and adding the writer's wish to compliment the author of *Tristram Shandy* – who else can come to mind but Charles Avison, the Newcastle organist and composer, whom Sterne almost certainly knew, but, whether he did or not, had certainly paid tribute to in *Tristram Shandy* as the re-orchestrator of 'the sixth of Avison's Scarlatti'? (*TS*, 3.5.192)

KENNETH MONKMAN
Shandy Hall

*****

NOTE: A draft of the first section of this article was found among Kenneth Monkman's papers. A number of minor additions have been made, quotations checked, and appropriate footnotes added. The remainder has been reconstructed from his notes made at the time of the events and the documents which he preserved.

*****

Over the next two hundred and twenty years there are a number of additional snippets of information or misinformation about the circumstances of Sterne's death and occasional references to the state of his resting place. A poem which is only identified in Kenneth Monkman's papers as being a photocopy 'from LPC's cuttings' – that is, from the extensive researches of Lewis Perry Curtis – appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, volume 56 (1769), p. 932:

To the MEMORY *of* GENIUS.

Written with a Pencil on the Grave-stone of the celebrated L. STERNE, who lies Buried in a neat Cemetery belonging to St. George's Church Hanover-square.

By WILLIAM HOLLAND.

Thou mild Divinity that warms the breast,
And points – where Yorick's honour'd relics rest!
Whose mystic pow'r awakes with holy zeal

Figure 13.11 "NOTE" as headstone surrounded by asterisks in "The Skull." © The Laurence Sterne Trust.

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* * * * *

> NOTE: A draft of this article was found among Kenneth Monkman's papers. A number of minor additions have been made, quotations checked, and appropriate footnotes added. The remainder has been reconstructed from his notes made at the time of the events and the documents which he preserved.

* * * * *

This unsigned note in the body of the text occupies a sort of asterisked no–man's–land between the part Monkman wrote and the part Day wrote. For his part, Day repeats in an endnote some of what he wrote in the note in the body of the text in a slightly different way: "Much of the remainder of this article has been reconstructed from Kenneth Monkman's own manuscript notes made at the time of the negotiations and from the file of his correspondence. Where other sources have been used they are indicated" (79, n. 21). Is this endnote an accident, a leftover the journal's editor didn't catch and delete? Or is it a symptom of a repetition compulsion driven by Sterne that we are seeing here?[32] Are they variants? If the repetition is a symptom, would the differences between what the note says and what the endnote says be worth reading closely? It is hard to say, especially since Day's editorial changes to the draft Day has reconstructed have been made silently.

In the event, it is not clear that it is Sterne's skull that now lies six feet under at St. Michael's. Monkman measured the head of a bust of Sterne now in Shandy Hall to identify the size of skulls in St. George's Field. Many graves had been robbed many times, so by 1969, it was impossible to determine whose bones belonged to whom. But Monkman thought he had found Sterne's. Maybe he did. One reader wrote this skeptical, amusing letter about the 1969 reburial to the editor, which I quote in full:

> I realize how appropriate it is for the Laurence Sterne trust to rescue Yorick's skull from a neglected grave—if only to re-enter it in a more carefully tended plot. … Whether or not Sterne's corpse made a single or return journey to Cambridge, it does seem more proper to consider the Laurence Sterne Trust's *objet trouvé* as one among the other 11,500 skulls recovered from the burial ground. The operation of the anonymous surgeon's calipers is as entertaining as any of Dr. Slop's exercises, but I do know that a certain area of doubt will be left intact. A sawn-off skull, 200 years in the ground, may all too well comply with a foreboding of Tristram's father: "Good God! Cried my father, what havoc and destruction this must make in the infinitely fine and tender texture of the cerebellum!"
>
> Yours Shandely,
> DAVID THOMSON.

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Figure 13.12 Unburied skull thought to be Sterne's, located at Cambridge University. Jenna Dittmar. Reproduced from Dittmar and Mitchell, 2016.

In his defense, if one is needed, Monkman had written or was to write in his posthumously published article that "the presumed skull" of Sterne had been reinterred.[33] (Monkman's witty reply to David Thomson also ran under the headline "Alas, poor Yorick.") Adding to doubts that Monkman actually found Sterne's skull, Jenna M. Dittmar and Piers D. Mitchell have been published on the subject—citing "Alas, poor Yorick" in their title—and the authors maintain that the real skull is at Cambridge University (see Figure 13.12). This skull was never buried but put on display by Cambridge anatomist Charles Collignon.[34] Dittmar and Mitchell conclude their article on the "Afterlife of Laurence Sterne" with these unsettlingly confident words:

> The remains of the famous Laurence Sterne were the first of a prominent individual in the collection of Charles Collignon, and later the Cambridge Museum. His presence would have added significant prestige value to the collection and it is likely for this reason that his skull was undamaged when he was dissected. Furthermore, the presence

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> of Sterne's skull in the former collection of the Anatomical Museum settles the controversy over the final resting place of at least a part of Laurence Sterne and also the motivations behind why he was dissected.
>
> (565)

Which skull is Sterne's, if either? Any answer depends on anecdotes about eighteenth-century grave robbers digging up Sterne's cadaver and the anatomist who did or did not saw the skull across the forehead and make knife-marks on it before he apparently recognized the corpse as Sterne's. Rather oddly, the "Cambridge" skull advocates do not cite Monkman and Day's article, nor do they mention the reinterment of a skull presumed to be Sterne's when it was buried in 1969 in Coxwold.

Sterne's Nicked Names

As we know, a great deal of critical attention has been paid to Yorick's skull in *Hamlet*.[35] Like the skull the gravedigger tells Hamlet is Yorick's, the "Sterne" skull can no more be confidently identified than can questions about Sterne's writings—finished, or to be continued?—can be conclusively sorted. Publishing the Monkman and Day article as one conjointly authored publication rather than two, each with its own separate author, one posthumously published, the other not, requires that academic decorum be breached regarding page layout, punctuation, headnotes, and attribution of authorship. The essay falls not into two neatly divided parts, as we might expect given there are two authors, but three. As we saw earlier, the second part is an unsigned note separated out by asterisks, a form of punctuation that may vaguely recall to some readers the rectangle that surrounds the first citation of "Alas poor Yorick!" on the page facing the black page in *Tristram Shandy* (see Figure 13.3). A sort of headnote—or headstone?—that ordinarily would go at the beginning of the endnotes is unceremoniously inserted between the two signed parts. Only when we begin the third part do we realize both that Day is the author because he mentions Monkman and that the first part is ghostwritten, so to speak. Moreover, the essay begins a second time without a title page for Day's part. Curiously, the article is both elegantly and clumsily, carefully and carelessly, organized in ways that, however obscurely, call up Sterne's posthumous fate. In the table of contents of the issue of the *Shandean* in which "The Skull" appears, the author of "The Skull" is listed as "by Kenneth Monkman, and continued by W.G. Day" (see Figure 13.13). Another Sterne effect may be glimpsed barely in the photo of Monkman (see Figure 13.7), captioned: "inspecting the first of Sterne's tombstones." Compare

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Figure 13.13 Table of contents of *The Shandean* commemorative issue dedicated to Kenneth Monkman. © The Laurence Sterne Trust.

this scene of pathos of Monkman touching Sterne's new gravestone and Sterne's tombstones to the engraving in Figure 13.2 of this chapter. Unlike the family in the engraving who mourn Sterne, Monkman appears to be mourning the passing of the first tombstone. As if he were playing Sterne's friend John Hall-Stevenson, alias Eugenius, publishing the continuation of *A Sentimental Journey* soon after Sterne died, Day posthumously continues the deceased Monkman's work, as if his part were a sequel like Stevenson's.[36]

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Let me close by recalling Jacques Derrida's comments on Paul de Man's notion of the last word after the last cited in the last epigraph above. The errors that, according to de Man, call forth confessions in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's autobiography (which do not manage to excuse those errors and indeed introduce new errors made by de Man, as Derrida notes), are in need of posthumous confession. That Derrida ends his essay by conjuring de Man's ghost may be linked to a different sort of error supported by Sterne, himself an heir of Rousseau's, related to the proper name and its role in publications and burials. Consider what the narrator of *Tristram Shandy* says about Yorick's name:

> YORICK was this parson's name, and, what is very remarkable in it, (as appears from a most ancient account of the family, wrote upon strong vellum, and now in perfect preservation) it had been exactly so spelt for near, —I was within an ace of saying nine hundred years;—but I would not shake my credit in telling an improbable truth, however indisputable in itself;—and therefore I shall content myself with only saying—It had been exactly so spelt, without the least variation or transposition of a single letter, for I do not know how long.
>
> (27–28)

To verify that the spelling of Yorick's name has not changed, Sterne refers the reader to Saxo Grammaticus. But the reference is a "read" herring. Eric, not Yorick, is in Saxo Grammaticus.[37] Even more strikingly, in *A Sentimental Journey*, Yorick covers his name when he shows Hamlet to the Count of B: "I lay'd my finger upon YORICK, and advancing the book to the Count, with my finger all the way over the name—*Me, Voici!* said I" (71). The indexical moment—pointing with a finger—to the proper name is a moment of complete illegibility. *Tristram Shandy* offers us a more or perhaps less radical nicknaming: Trismegistus, the preferred name of Tristram's father, is abbreviated to "Tris" by the nurse Susannah when her memory fails and is then expanded by the curate performing the baptism to Tristram, a name the father despises. "Tristram said he! &c., &c., &c., &c., so Tristram was I called" (5: XIV). This nicking of Tristram's name occurs in conjunction with Tristram's genital mutilation.[38] The critical consensus is that Tristram was circumcised rather than castrated by the window sash. However, the extent of the mutilation is undecidable given that it is narrated by way of asterisks (6: XIV) (see Figure 13.14).[39] Tristram's name is further trimmed by Sterne and given to another character, Corporal Trim. Whatever Sterne's faults may or may not be, they include his refusal to have a proper name.

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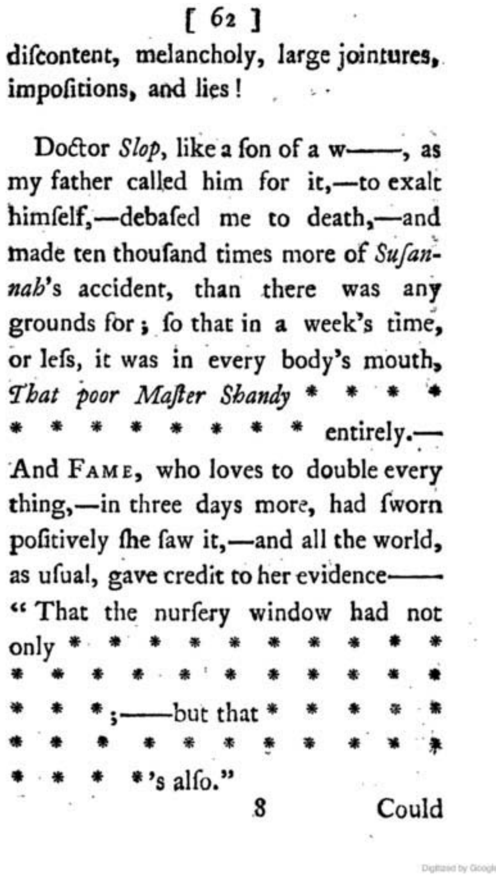

[62]

diſcontent, melancholy, large jointures, impoſitions, and lies!

Doctor *Slop*, like a ſon of a w——, as my father called him for it,—to exalt himſelf,—debaſed me to death,—and made ten thouſand times more of *Suſannah*'s accident, than there was any grounds for; ſo that in a week's time, or leſs, it was in every body's mouth, *That poor Maſter Shandy* * * * * * * * * * * * * entirely.— And FAME, who loves to double every thing,—in three days more, had ſworn poſitively ſhe ſaw it,—and all the world, as uſual, gave credit to her evidence—— "That the nurſery window had not only * ;——but that * 's alſo."

8 Could

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Figure 13.14 Tristram Shandy's mutilation by asterisk.[40]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Had he been able to see this publication through, the Late Mr. ——— &c., &c. would, we suppose, have liked to thank the many people who made it possible. Please consider this note as a kind of headstone with the following names inscribed on it: Scott Newstok, Nicholas Nace, John Archer, Mary Newbould, Elizabeth Burt, Julia Lupton, Laurence A. Rickels, Niels Herold, Peter Holland, Robert Chibka, Patrick Wildgust, and, in much, much larger letters, the editors of the present collection, SONYA FREEMAN LOFTIS, ALLISON KELLAR, AND LISA ULEVICH.

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Notes

1 This discussion deals with obscure arcana only a small number of Sterne scholars might view as significant. And maybe not even them. The working assumption of bibliography is that the dead person and his or her works can be ordered, laid to rest. Perhaps only eventually. Sterne's case dramatically calls this assumption into question.

2 Editors' Note: this chapter is a reconstruction of a draft and notes left in an envelope in a desk drawer by the late Mr.——— &c., &c. and stored in a file on his computer. The password was "password."

3 Sterne, who had followed the news of his own death and resurrection as the English papers arrived in Paris, laughingly told Egerton that he had the perfect excuse for not writing, being 'above all Epistolary Correspondence, after my death,' But then, 'I find by the last English papers, I am once more alive. . . . Strange! That a man should be so inconsistent!'

(Cash, *Later Years*, 126–27)

And see also Petrie 261–66.

4 How close can too-close reading be? Consider Abra Ancliffe's remarkable study:

> *The Secret Astronomy of Tristram Shandy* is a book that reproduces over one hundred, self-reflexive black pages from multiple paperback editions and copies of Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. When taken out of context and accumulated, these once playful, visual metaphors reveal the printing inconsistencies of ink on paper (varying density, hickeys, oxidation spots, and fingerprints). The hidden nature of the page, that which was unread, can now be read. In this case, astronomical imagery is revealed; that of stars speckled across an inky blackness or the soft haze and ripple of a galaxy. Since the 1760s, readers, printers and publishers have been forced to grapple with the black pages of Sterne's novel; this struggle with discovery, meaning, and craft is at the heart of *The Secret Astronomy of Tristram Shandy*.
>
> (Ancliffe)

5 See Derrida, "Fors": "What is a crypt? Am I writing in one?" (64).

6 I would like to thank my colleague Roger Maioli for recalling my attention to this invaluable article.

7 For an original and important analysis of the relation between plagiarism, improper burial, and "sui-citation," see Rickels 142–53.

8 Editors' Note: Dear Reader, we regret to inform you that due to limitations of space, we were forced to cut fascinating sections of this chapter, actually what amounts to several chapters of a book-length manuscript, about the importance of pathos and impersonality in Paul de Man's work on autobiography, posterity, and defacement, and the importance to Derrida, of minor errors of transcription and translation by de Man in de Man's work on Jean-Jacques Rousseau as well as de Man's comment in "The Concept of Irony": "I'm not sure we are entirely safe with *Tristram Shandy*" (167). There is also an interesting discussion of the last chapter of *The Postcard*, "Du Tout," in which Derrida questions how to tell the difference between a typographical error and a Freudian slip (513–14). Please do forgive us for slighting these wonderful sections. It should be noted that some recent historicist work on literary monuments and posterity is Derrida-friendly.

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See Parry; Simonsen; Powell; Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body*; and Prendergast, *Poetical Dust*. For work on the spectrality of literary afterlives, see also Cohen, Rickels, Richter, and Kahan.

9 See de Man's sentence: "Allegories are always allegories of metaphor and, as such, they are always allegories of the impossibility of reading a sentence in which the genitive 'of' has itself to 'read' as a metaphor" (*Allegories of Reading* 205).

10 See Rickels, *Acting Out in Groups*.

11 One of the odder silent translations of Derrida's works into English may be found in the title of *La carte postale: de Socrate a Freud et au-dela*. *La carte postale* is translated in one word, as "Postcard," instead of the customary two words, "Post Card." See Derrida, *The Post Card*.

12 Months later, I wondered if the winged skull at the top of the tombstone was the inspiration for the title of the book of essays celebrating Sterne, *The Winged Skull*. *The Winged Skull: Papers from the Laurence Sterne Bicentenary Conference* was edited by Arthur H. Cash and John M. Stedmond and published in 1971, two years after the reinterment of Sterne's skull in Coxwold.

13 In *A Sentimental Journey*, Sterne writes: "Alas, poor Yorick! cried I, what art thou doing here?"

14 See https://archive.org/stream/magnificentcolle00stan_0/magnificentcolle00stan_0_djvu.txt. In October of 2016, the Late Mr.——— &c., &c., ordered an engraving he found for sale online and had it framed. It now hangs in his reading room.

15 http://www.laurencesternetrust.org.uk/shandy-hall.php. A very informative video about Shandy Hall is online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7FRF6Tl6Ik.

16 Sterne's addition of an exclamation point at the end of Shakespeare's "Alas poor Yorick" may seem to be an inconsequential error of transcription. However, Gabriel Josipovici devotes two pages in his book on *Hamlet* to the importance of Sterne's addition of the exclamation (*Hamlet: Fold by Fold* 214–15).

17 On the phrase "here lies" in epitaphs, see Newstok.

18 Email to the author, dated 2016.

19 See Burt, "Hamlet's Hauntographology," and Paster.

20 See the *Independent* newspaper obituary for Monkman: "He is to be buried at the foot of Sterne's grave. …";

> the graveyard in Archery Fields in which he was buried, by Hyde Park in London, was evacuated by the Church Commissioners, and a skull—alas, poor Yorick—found, which (carefully measured by Monkman) proved to correspond, in its unusual length and narrowness, with the sculpted head by Nolleken.
>
> (Barker)

21 Sadly, the editors have not been able to determine the identity of the critic to whom the author is referring.

22 Lost email to the author.

23 My neologism "pseudography" is inspired by Derrida's "pseudology" and furthers Derrida's point that there is no testimony without fiction.

24 For seminal work on Sterne as "phantasmal," see Sichel.

25 By examining this continuity closely through Sterne's achronic citations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, we will see that Sterne disturbs seemingly unquestionable assumptions about sickness and health, life, death, and afterlife that govern dominant narratives of authors and questions about their posterity, or what

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I will call, following Jacques Derrida, their "sur-vivance," or life more than life, and "posthuming," a neologism Derrida coined. Rather than produce a new critical reading of Sterne works, I will trace very particular instances of Sterne's "SIGH-tation" and "self-psy-tation" of Yorick, which produce a seemingly inexhaustible production of last words after the last, a production that puts into question—dare I say, deconstructs?—the uncritically assumed opposition that governs Sterne's reception by modern critics, namely, the opposition between sentimental and ironic readings of Sterne's works or attempt to fuse them by making sentimental an adjective and irony the noun it describes in addition to the question of whether *Tristram Shandy* is finished and the meaning, if any, of the punctuation on the last page of *A Sentimental Journey*. Let me add that *Tristram Shandy* is central to Richard Macksey's account of Gérard Genette's *Paratexts* in the "Foreword" (xi–xii), and Genette mentions *Tristram Shandy* fifteen times in the book. Genette's book is actually a book about publishing, and posthumous publication becomes increasingly central to the documents and dossiers that make up what Genette calls prepublication:

> the posthumous peritext is gradually becoming the receptacle, and as it were the museum, of the totality of the paratext, whatever place may have been chosen for it first. … So we have come full circle: having started out with publishing, our investigation returns to publishing. The ultimate destiny of the paratext is sooner or later to catch up with its text in order to make a book.
>
> (403)

26 See Yoklavich 508–19.
27 The forged letters appeared under Sterne's name, however, with no mention of Combe. See www.tristramshandyweb.it/sezioni/e-text/letters/preface.htm.
28 A facsimile digital reproduction may be found at https://books.google.com/books/about/Letters_from_Yorick_to_Eliza.html.
29 See Hamilton 420–29.
30 On Sterne's headstones, see Oakley, and Monkman and Day.
31 The author contacted Patrick Wildgust, Peter de Voogd, and W.G. Day. None of them knew what happened to the photographs reproduced in the Monkman and Day article "The Skull."
32 See Fried.
33 See Oakley, Hughes, and Dittmar and Mitchell on Sterne's grave robbers. On Sterne's reburials, see "Sterne's Burial Place," "Sterne is at Rest Again," and Monkman and Day.
34 Piers D. Mitchell writes the author:

> I entirely agree that we do have to be cautious when it comes to the authenticity of "relics" of any kind. We certainly don't seem to have the post cranial skeleton anymore, so it is likely that was reburied at some point. However, we suspect we have the genuine skull as there is good written evidence that he was dissected here in Cambridge, the anatomist who dissected him is known to have added a lot of specimens to the anatomy museum, this skull was entered into our museum catalogue in the right time period, and the skull was written upon using pen and ink when added to the museum and the words can clearly be read today.
>
> (Mitchell)

35 On Yorick's skull, see Sofer (47–74), Halpern (31–52), Aebischer (206–25), Williamson (n.p.), Hunt (71–84), Holderness (223–36), Walter (93–105), Bates (78–83), Paster (41–60), Callus (213–41), Bloomfield (n.p.), Drakakis

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(17–31), Menzer (31–65), Callaghan (27–28) and Mullaney (139–62). On Sterne's citation of Shakespeare's line, see *Tristram Shandy in a Reverie*, *Yorick's Skull; or, College Oscitations*, *Sentiments on the Death of the Sentimental Yorick*, Petrie (261–66), Monkman (112–23), Thomson (n.p.), Macksey (1006–20), Chibka (125–51), Parnell (148–55), Hughes (156–62), Martinez (27–46), Rumbold (n.p.), and Williams (313–44). Shakespeare's line also appears in an essay about Schiller's skull (Herd 241–47). See also, "DNA Tests Reveal "Schiller's Skull Not His." On Shakespeare's skull, see A Warwickshire Man, Hammerschmidt-Hummel (67), Castor (n.p.), Lawless (n.p.), and Little (n.p.). On Sterne's skull, see Howard (n.p.) and Monkman and Day (45–79). On Sir Thomas Browne's skull, see Tildesley (1–76). See also Nace (31–58) on Samuel Richardson and the skull in *Pamela*.

36 On friendship and posthumous publication, see Blanchot, *Friendship*; and Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*.

37 On the spelling of Yorick as well as the similar pronunciations of York and Yorick in Sterne's day, see Monkman, *The Winged Skull*; and Santana.

38 See Darby 72–84 and King 291–310. On the missing or "castrated" chapters of *Tristram Shandy*, see Nace, "Unprinted Matter." See also Craig Dworkin's recreation of it, described as follows:

> Chapter XXV of the fourth volume of Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, Gentleman opens: "No doubt, Sir,—there is a whole chapter wanting here,—and a chasm of ten pages made in the book by it." A jump in pagination confirms the lacuna: Chapter XXIV is missing entirely. After 250 years, however, the novel is finally complete: here at last is the missing chapter, designed to fit neatly into the first edition (R & J Dodsley, 1761) with a simple snip of thread. The interpolated text uses all of the historically consistent English words in which the letters f or s can be substituted for the others (or vice versa) and still result in a legitimate word. Each sentence is based on grammatical constructions found elsewhere in Sterne's novel.
>
> (n.p.)

In "Typewriter Ribbon, Limited Ink (2)" (2002), Derrida connects these figures both to performativity and to de Man's apparently minor errors of transcription and translation (74; 104–05; especially 117).

39 See Kay for a helpful discussion of proper names in *Tristram Shandy*.

40 *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, first edition.

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